

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 0132

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, GR, TU
SUBJECT: EARLY CARAMANLIS-ECEVIT SUMMIT UNLIKELY

REF: (A) ATHENS 5319-77, (B) ATHENS 6502-77

1. WITH THE COLLAPSE OF THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT IN TURKEY AND THE DESIGNATION OF BULENT ECEVIT TO SUCCEED HIM AS PRIME MINISTER, OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS THE GREEK MEDIA HAS CARRIED SUNDRY REPORTS, BASED MOTLY ON FOREIGN SOURCES, TO THE EFFECT THAT ECEVIT WOULD SEEK AN EARLY SUMMIT MEETING WITH GREEK PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS TO DISCUSS DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES ON THE AEGEAN AND THE CYPRUS QUESTIONS. REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY A REPORTER ON JANUARY 3, A GOG SPOKESMAN PARRIED THE QUESTION ON THE LIKELIHOOD OF SUCH A MEETING BY CHARACTERIZING THE MEDIA PLAY AS ZIRRESPONSIBLE CONJECTURES". HE ADDED THAT AT ANY RATE IT WAS PREMATURE TO DISCUSS SUCH A MEETING SINCE ECEVIT HAD NOT YET EVEN FORMED A GOVERNMENT.

2. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED BY A USUALLY
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WELL-INFORMED SOURCE, WHO JUST COMPLETED A SERIES OF MEETINGS WITH TOP LEVEL GOG POLICY OFFICIALS, THAT ECEVIT RECENTLY HAD SENT THE GREEKS AN EXPLORATORY MESSAGE SUGGESTING THE POSSIBILITY OF AN EARLY MEETING WITH CARAMANLIS. THE GREEK RESPONSE IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN ALONG THE LINES THAT A SUMMIT AT THIS POINT WOULD BE PREMATURE -- APPARENTLY SINCE THE EXPERTS AT THE

"TECHNICAL LEVEL" HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO MAKE
PROGRESS ON THE OUTSTANDING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE
TWO COUNTRIES.

3. COMMENT: ADDRESSEES WILL RECALL THAT SHORTLY
AFTER THE TURKISH JUNE 1977 ELECTIONS, ECEVIT CALLED
FOR AN EARLY MEETING WITH CARAMANLIS. CARAMANLIS'
LUKEWARM REACTION (RETEL B) WAS IN ESSENCE A
REJECTION OF ECEVIT'S PROPOSAL AS UNTIMELY.
APPARENTLY THIS VIEWPOINT STILL PREVAILS WITHIN THE
RANKS OF THE GOG WHICH IS HESITANT TO RUSH
INTO SUMMIT TALKS UNTIL IT BECOMES
EVIDENT THAT AN ECEVIT GOVERNMENT IS IN A POSITION TO
MAKE MEANINGFUL DECISIONS AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY,
THAT THAT GOVERNMENT, WITH ITS EXPECTED NARROW
MAJORITY, HAS MORE STAYING POWER THAN ITS PREDECESSOR.
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